

## CLAIMS

### **What is claimed is:**

1. A method of automatically providing assistance to a system user comprising the steps of:

displaying a menu comprising a plurality of menu items;  
detecting a user request for information regarding an unselectable menu item of the plurality of menu items;  
determining information regarding the unselectable menu item in response to the detection of the user request; and  
displaying a message containing the information regarding the unselectable menu item in response to the user request.

2. The method of claim 1 wherein the unselectable menu item is displayed in a font different from a font used to display other menu items of the plurality of menu items.

3. The method of claim 1 wherein the information regarding the unselectable menu item is determined dynamically as a function of a system status.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of detecting a user request further comprises:

detecting a user pointer indicia hovering over the unselectable menu item.

5. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of detecting a user request further comprises:

detecting a user right click on the unselectable menu item.

6. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of determining information further comprises:

determining a reason for the unselectability of the unselectable menu item.

7. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of determining information further comprises:

determining remedies for the unselectability of the unselectable menu item.

8. A system comprising:

a display for presenting graphical user interfaces to a user;

a pointing device for receiving user input;

a managing task coupled to the display and to the pointing device and

including GUI features for presenting a menu comprising a plurality of menu items wherein at least one menu item of the plurality of menu items is an unselectable menu item; and

a managed task communicatively coupled to the managing task for providing information regarding the plurality of menu items,

wherein the information includes information regarding the unselectable menu item, and

wherein the managing task is adapted to present the information regarding the unselectable menu item in response to user input from the pointing device.

9. The system of claim 8 wherein the managing task is responsive to sensing hovering of the pointing device over the unselectable menu item.

10. The system of claim 8 wherein the managing task is responsive to sensing right clicking of the pointing device on the unselectable menu item.

11. The system of claim 8 wherein the managing task is responsive to sensing clicking of the pointing device a selectable menu item of the plurality of menu items that requests information regarding the unselectable menu item.

12. The system of claim 8 further comprising:

a reason table coupled to the managing task and storing detailed information regarding the reasons for unselectability of the unselectable menu item wherein the managing task is adapted to present the detailed information regarding the reasons for unselectability to a user in response to user input from the pointing device.

13. The system of claim 12 wherein the information regarding the unselectable menu item includes a reason code indicating the reason for the unselectability of the

unselectable menu item and wherein the reason table is accessible using the reason code as an index.

14. The system of claim 8

wherein the managing task is operable in a management system, and

wherein the managed task is operable in a managed system, and

wherein the system further comprises:

a communication medium coupling the managed task to the managing task.

15. The system of claim 14 further comprising:

a reason table in the management system coupled to the managing task and storing detailed information regarding the reasons for unselectability of the unselectable menu item wherein the managing task is adapted to present the detailed information regarding the reasons for unselectability to a user in response to user input from the pointing device.

16. The system of claim 15 wherein the information regarding the unselectable menu item includes a reason code indicating the reason for the unselectability of the unselectable menu item and wherein the reason table is accessible using the reason code as an index.